

Written by Michael Shank
Thursday, 11 October 2012 00:00

Washington, D.C. – Congressional Progressive Caucus co-chairs Reps. Raúl M. Grijalva (D-AZ) and Keith Ellison (D-MN) and CPC Peace and Security Task Force chairman Rep. Mike Honda (D-CA) released the following statement today, the U.N. International Day of the Girl, on the recent shooting in Pakistan of teenage activist Malala Yousafzai.

“Millions of Pakistanis are rightly expressing their outrage today that radical violence has cost Malala Yousafzai a promising future and potentially her life, and we are proud to stand with them. No one should be shot for promoting education, least of all a 14-year-old girl trying to make her country a better place for women. We share the hopes of Pakistanis and many people around the world that this terrible incident will spark deep soul-searching and reform. Shrugging it off as nothing more than another shooting far from the United States is a disservice to Ms. Yousafzai, to the people of Pakistan, and to women everywhere.

“As Freida Pinto and Isobel Coleman rightly point out in a Huffington Post column today, ‘Worldwide, two-thirds of the 130 million children who are not in school are girls; more than 25,000 girls under the age of 18 are married every day, and in the developing world, one-third of girls are married before they turn 18.’ Many young women around the world, despite their potential and regardless of their human rights, face a lifetime of subservience and second-class status. Malala Yousafzai is as courageous a voice against this status quo as we have seen in a long time. Her life, her actions and her legacy will forever inspire women young and old to fight for their just place alongside men in determining their own futures. That she has been able to accomplish so much and get the attention of the entire world at the age of 14 is a poignant reminder that we are all potential activists and potential heroes.

“Today, on the U.N. International Day of the Girl, we share our optimism that a better world for women – a world without violence and repression, in which they build the lives they choose – is not as far as it may seem. We also remind everyone that it will not build itself, and that even if statesmen continue to fail them young women like Malala Yousafzai will continue to build it regardless.”

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